



Department of Justice

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DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE WILL NOT CHANGE POSITION ON 'FIN-SYN'

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- The Department of Justice's Antitrust Division today told a federal judge it continues to support removal of antitrust consent decrees that prohibit television networks from owning and syndicating the rerun rights of prime time television shows.

In a letter to Judge Manuel Real of the U.S. District Court in Los Angeles, the Department said it continues to support motions by ABC, CBS and NBC to be allowed to own financial interests in independently produced prime time shows and to syndicate reruns. Judge Real is overseeing the matter.

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) adopted financial interest and syndication (fin-syn) rules in 1970 following complaints that the networks dominated television broadcasting. The Department subsequently initiated antitrust proceedings against the networks that were settled in 1978 and 1980 consent decrees that included many of the restrictions incorporated in the fin-syn rules.

(MORE)

In recent years, the networks argued the rules were out-of-date and should be changed because of the advent of cable television and other competitors in television broadcasting. In April 1993, the FCC, with the support of the Department, eliminated many of the provisions of the fin-syn regulations, leaving the consent decrees as the only bar to network participation in rerun syndication.

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